

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Z World-Rabbit Semiconductor

Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex)

Lean Implementation

Client Profile:

Z-World, founded in 1983, is a pioneer in the embedded controls industry. The company offers a complete line of low-cost control solutions, ranging from single-board computers to core modules and operator interfaces. Z-World's customers span a wide range of industries and markets, including telecommunications, packaging, semiconductor manufacturing, test and instrumentation, remote system monitoring, and security/access control. Located in Davis, California, the company employs 125 people.

Situation:

Z-World's business was increasing at a 30 percent annual growth rate and was projected to grow at an even faster rate over the next five years. The Operations Group Management team at Z-World knew they had to overhaul their manufacturing processes to support the company's accelerating growth rate. The team felt a comprehensive implementation of Lean Principles in the manufacturing area was critical to their success. Z-World contacted the Corporation for Manufacturing Excellence (Manex), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

Manex led a two-day Kaizen Event for the Operations Group Management team and their staff, focusing on Lean Principles, Value Stream Mapping, and 5S. During the event, the team reorganized the Receiving/Inspection and Final Test areas to improve material flow and workflow. In addition, the team started rearranging the manufacturing floor to increase productivity. Profound changes occurred with the Operations Group employees as they embraced Lean Principles. The employees drove a cultural transformation in the manufacturing area, creating an environment of empowerment and continuous improvement. The team has sustained the changes started at the Kaizen Event and has subsequently implemented several production improvements. e

Results:

- * Final Test: 80 percent time reduction for finding a testing unit and its corresponding manual.
- * Wave Soldering: 50 percent time reduction for locating fixtures, safety, and work supplies.
- * Receiving/Inspection: 30 percent time reduction in work flow.
- * Increased efficiency.
- * Established culture of employee motivation, involvement, and team empowerment.
- * Sustained 5S work environments.

Testimonial:

"There has been an amazing transformation in the operations work force with regards to Lean implementation. A complete paradigm shift has occurred which has enabled each employee to feel

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and know they are empowered to use the Lean tools. The 5S principles of Lean have been implemented by the employees at an astonishing rate, showing consistently how this concept is now a belief."

Jes Vargas, Director of Operations